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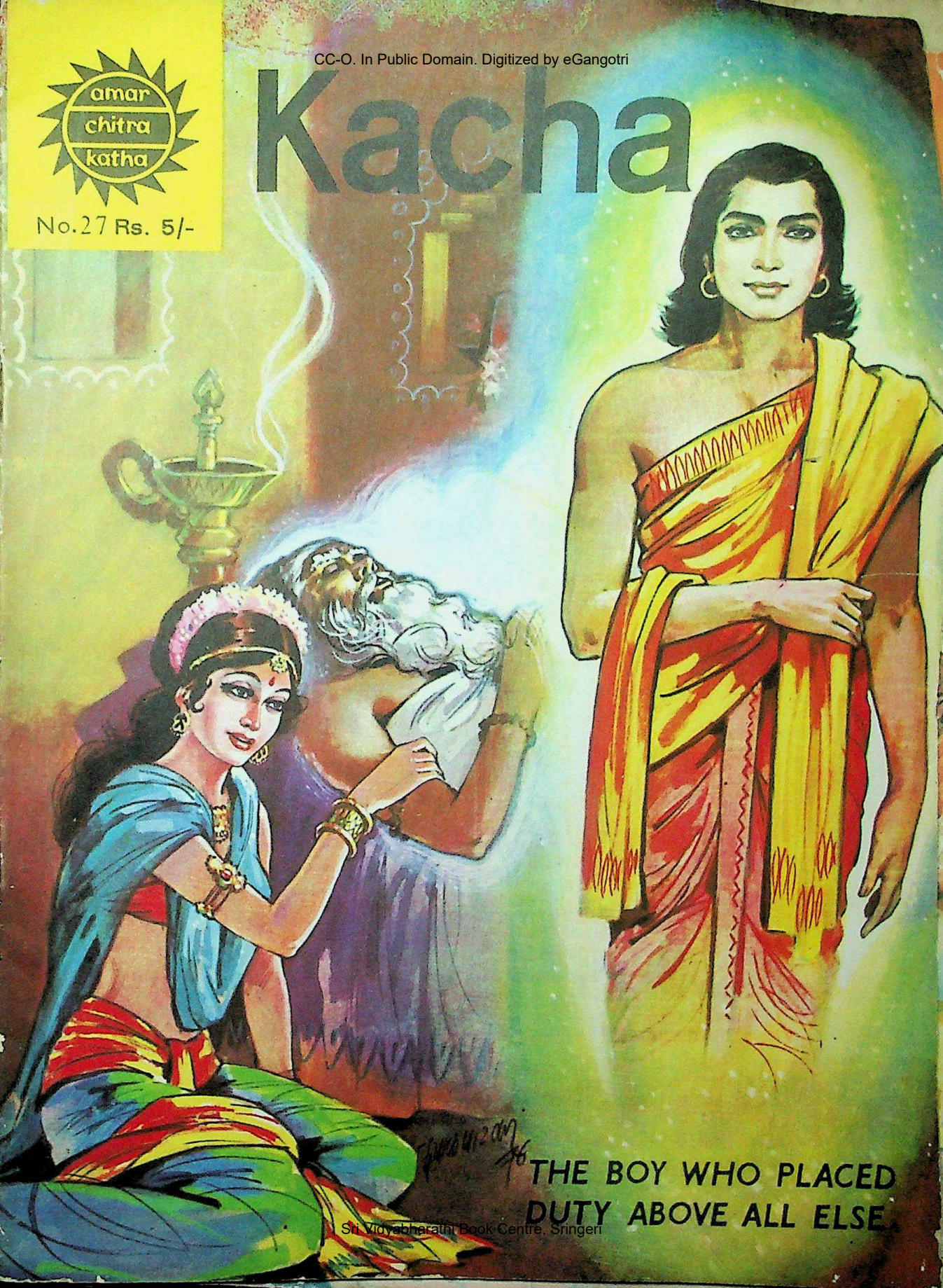
Kacha



THE BOY WHO PLACED DUTY ABOVE ALL ELSE

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The story of Kacha Devayani appears in the first book of the eighteen that are contained in the Mahabharata. The central theme of the Mahabharata is the 18-day war between the cousins, the Pandavas and the Kauravas, and their respective allies, on the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

Devayani, the daughter of Shukracharya, Guru to the Asuras, is an ancestress of of the Yadava clan, to which Krishna, the champion of the Pandavas, belongs.

Kacha is the son of Brihaspati, preceptor to the Devas. The story of Kacha and Devayani centres round the battle for supremacy between the Asuras and the Devas. How Kacha goes to the city of the Asuras and learns the secret craft of Sanjivani (reviving the dead) from Shukracharya and how his sense of duty triumphs over the pleas of the charming Devayani is retold in the following pages.

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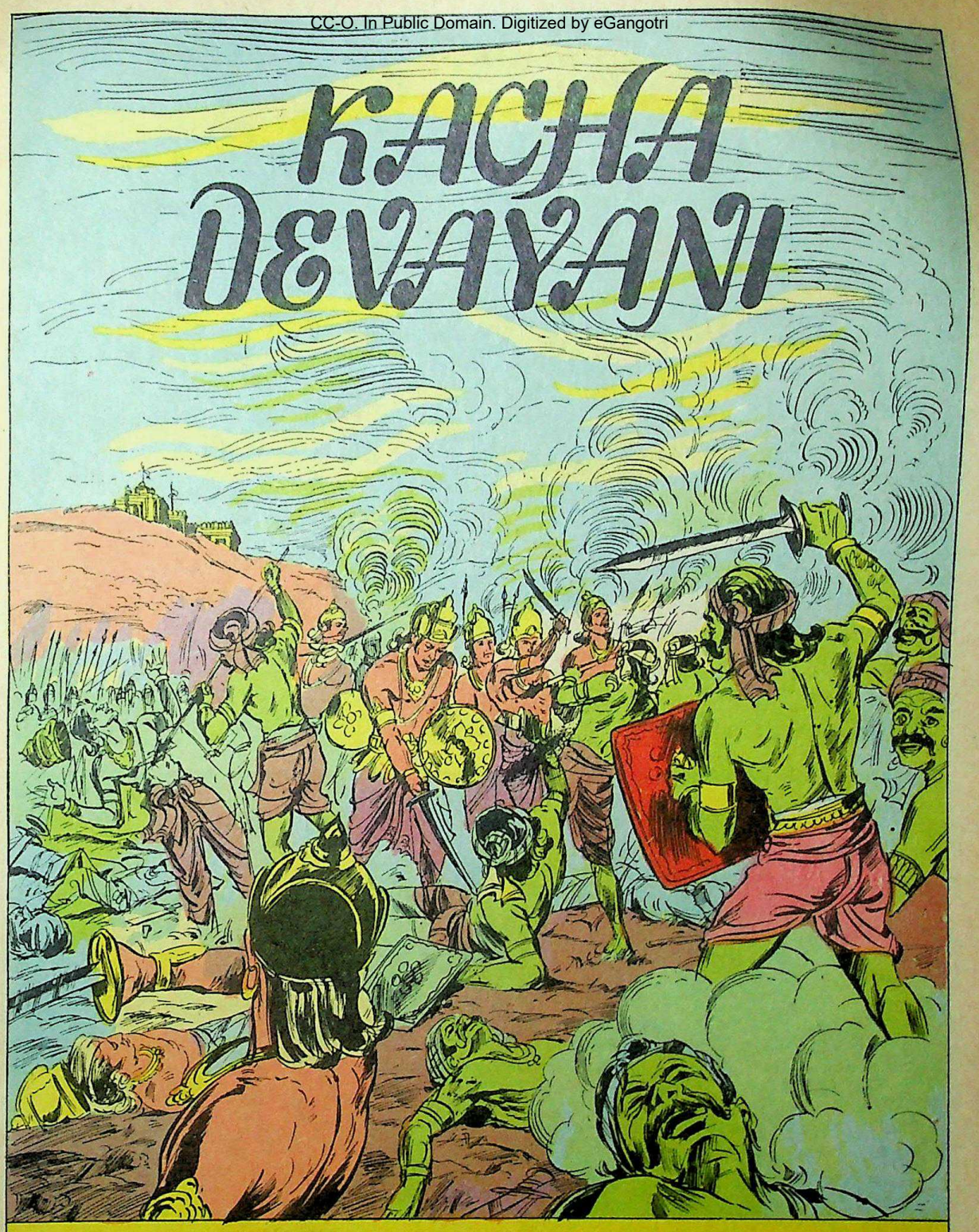
KACHA DEVAYANI



IN THE DAYS OF YORE, THE DEVAS AND THE ASURAS WERE EVER STRUGGLING FOR THE LORDSHIP OF THE THREE WORLDS.

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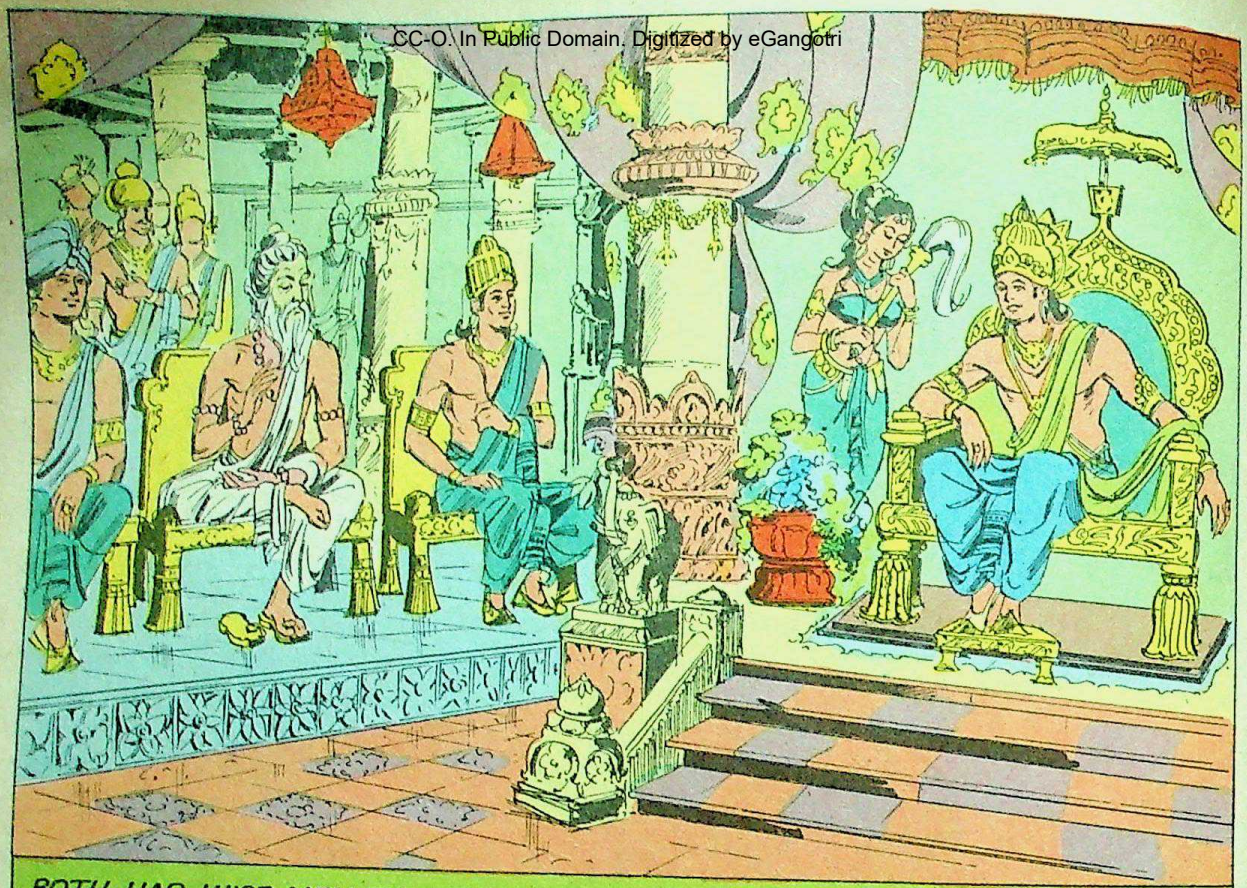

BOTH HAD WISE MEN TO GUIDE THEM. BRIHASPATI, THE SON OF SAGE ANGIRAS, LIVED IN THE ABODE OF INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS.

AND SHUKRACHARYA THE FAVOURITE PUPIL OF SAGE ANGIRAS, LIVED IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF THE ASURA KING, VRISHAPARVA.

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BUT OF THE TWO, SHUKRACHARYA ALONE KNEW THE CRAFT OF SANJIVANI, THE SECRET OF REVIVING THE DEAD.

AS LONG AS SHUKRACHARYA IS WITH US, OUR NUMBERS SHALL NEVER DECREASE.

HEAR!

HEAR!

HEAR!

FOR, THOSE WHO HAD FALLEN IN BATTLE WERE SIMPLY BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE, TO CONTINUE THE WAR ON THE DEVAS.

THE VALIANT DEVAS, TIRED OF THE UNEQUAL STRUGGLE WENT TO THE BRILLIANT, HANDSOME YOUTH, KACHA, THE SON OF BRIHASPATI.

YOU MUST GO TO SHUKRACHARYA AND LEARN THE CRAFT OF SANJIVANI. ONLY THEN CAN WE VANQUISH OUR SWORN ENEMIES.

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THE OBEDIENT AND DUTIFUL KACHA IMMEDIATELY SET OUT TO MEET SHUKRACHARYA.

I WONDER WHAT AWAITS ME IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF THE ASURAS.

THERE HE HUMBLY PRESENTED HIMSELF BEFORE THE GREAT WISE ONE.

I AM KACHA, THE SON OF BRIHASPATI. I WISH TO BECOME YOUR DISCIPLE. I SHALL OBEY YOU AND SERVE YOU LOYALLY.

SHUKRACHARYA GAVE HIM A WARM WELCOME.

I ACCEPT YOU AS MY PUPIL, O WORTHY KACHA, SON OF LEARNED BRIHASPATI.

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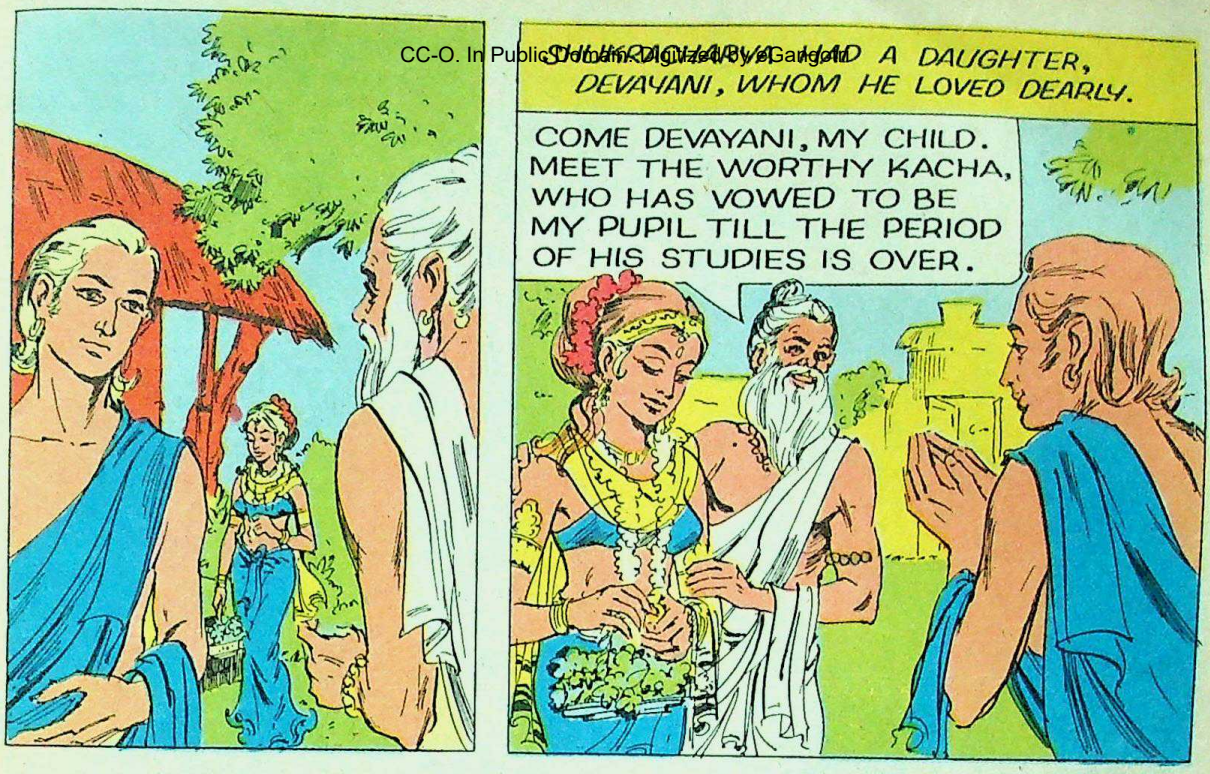

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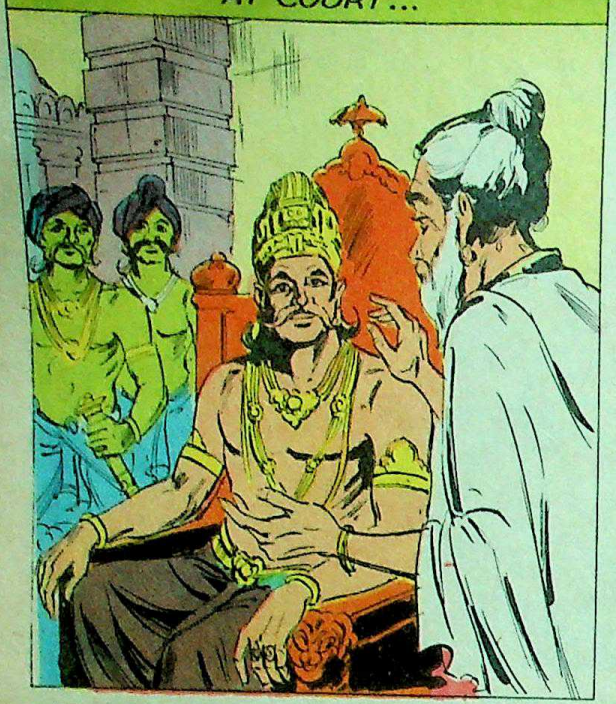
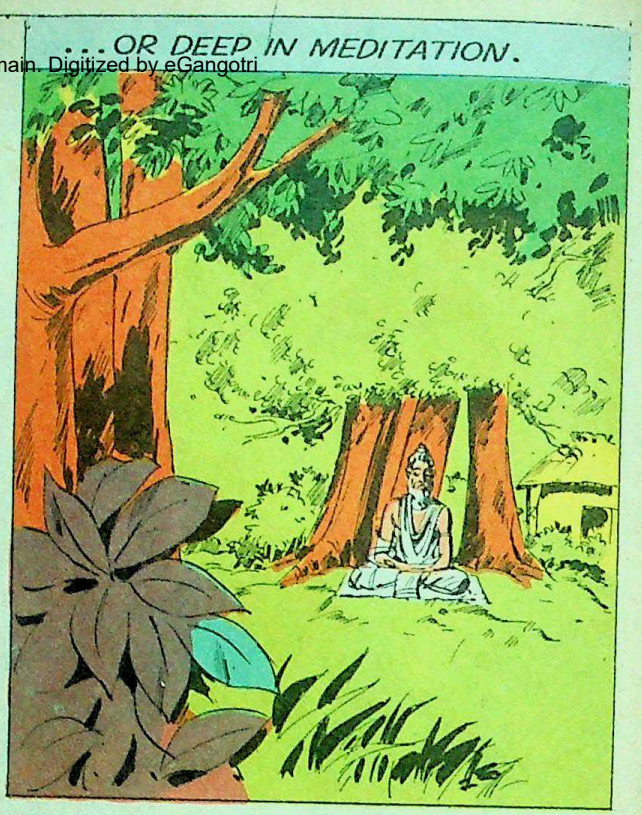
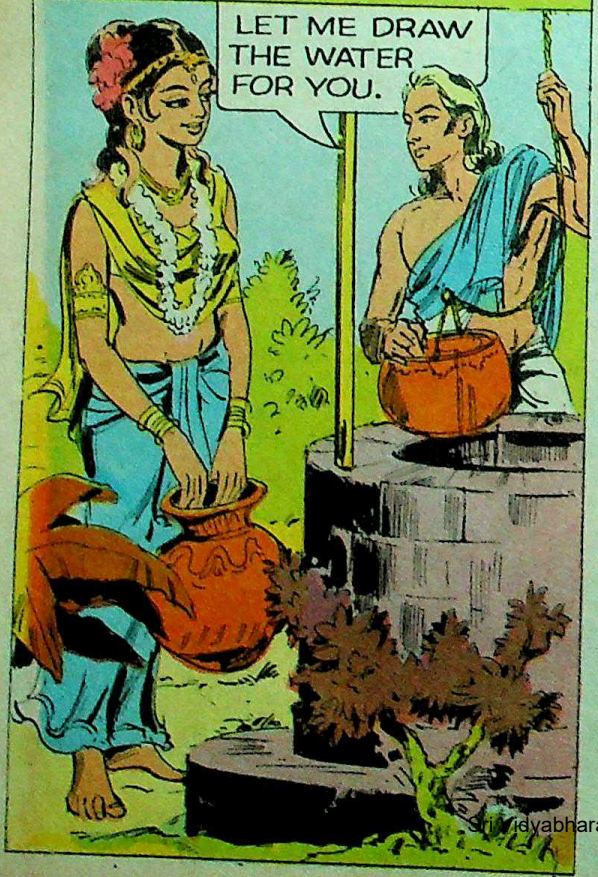
BUT MOST OF THE DAY SHUKRACHARYA WAS EITHER BUSY AT COURT...



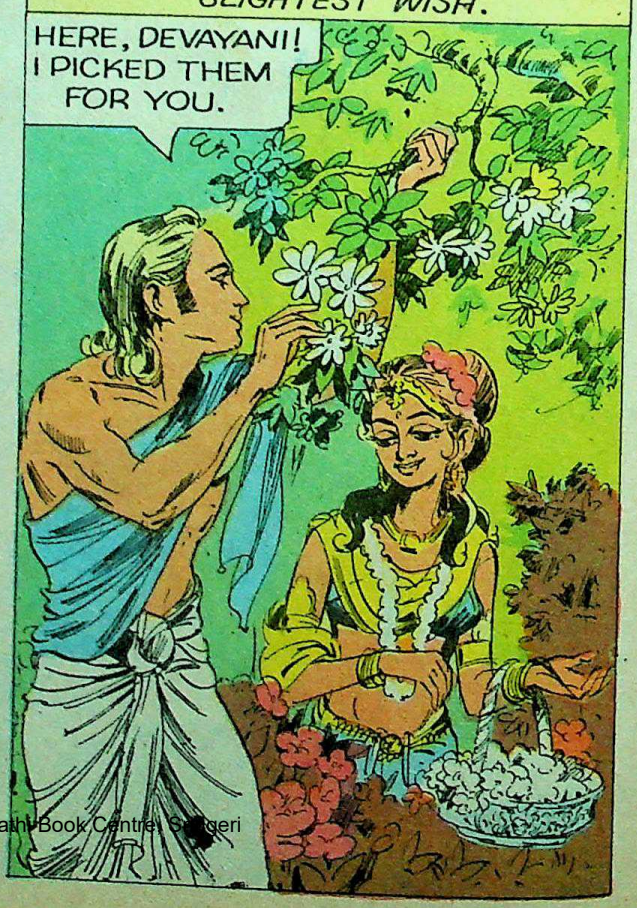
...OR DEEP IN MEDITATION.



SO KACHA HELPED DEVAYANI WITH HER DAILY CHORES.



AND TENDERLY FULFILLED HER SLIGHTEST WISH.



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WITHIN A FEW DAYS OF HIS ARRIVAL, KACHA FOUND HIMSELF SPENDING ALL HIS LEISURE HOURS IN THE COMPANY OF THE LIVELY DEVAYANI.

MUSIC, SONG AND DANCE NEVER FAIL TO GIVE ME PLEASURE. DO ANY OF THESE ARTS INTEREST YOU?

I CAN SING, DANCE AND PLAY ANY INSTRUMENT.

HOW WELL HE SINGS! HOW PEACEFUL IS HIS EXPRESSION! AND HOW IT DOES FILL MY HEART WITH A YEARNING, I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

AND KACHA WON HIS WAY INTO DEVAYANI'S HEART.

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ONCE TO TEASE HER, KACHA HID HIMSELF AMONG THE TREES.

WHERE COULD HE BE? HAS HE TIRED OF MY COMPANY? HAVE I DONE ANYTHING TO OFFEND HIM?

BUT DEVAYANI COULD NOT EVEN PRETEND TO BE ANGRY FOR LONG.

COME, LET US GO TO OUR FAVOURITE BOWER.

IT IS NOT AS WARM IN THE LAND OF DEVAS AS IT IS HERE.

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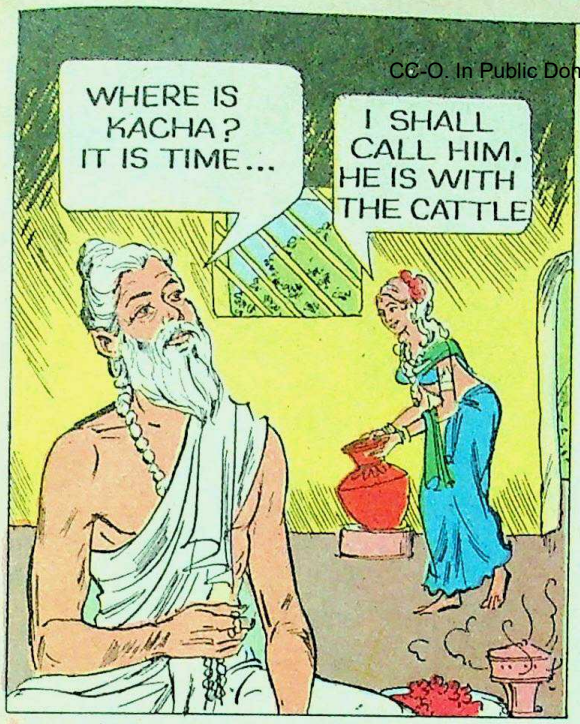

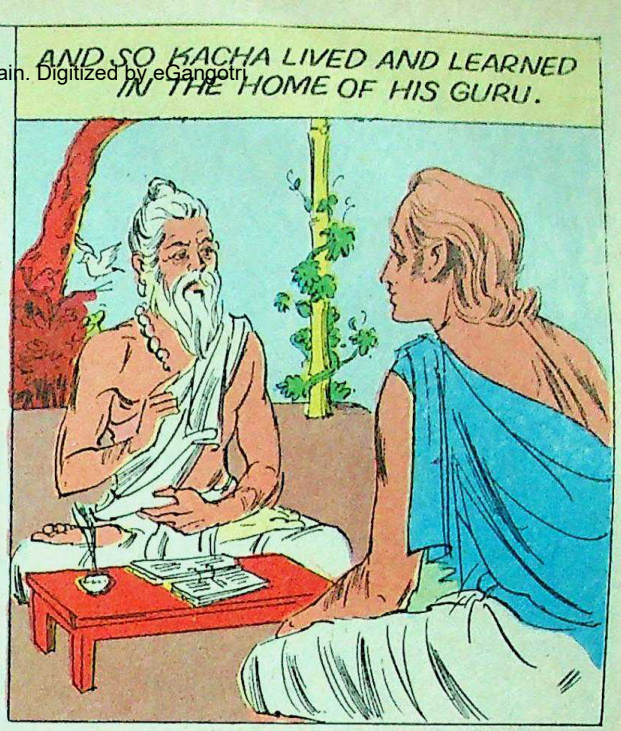

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ALL THE ASURAS ROSE AS ONE ROARING ANGRILY.

DOWN WITH THE SLY ONE.

KACHA MUST DIE.

KACHA SHALL BE KILLED.

WAIT! PATIENCE! WE SHALL HAVE TO DO THIS IN SECRECY. A GURU WILL NOT LET HIS PUPIL BE SLAIN.

THE ASURAS WAITED, BUT IMPATIENTLY. THEN ONE DAY_

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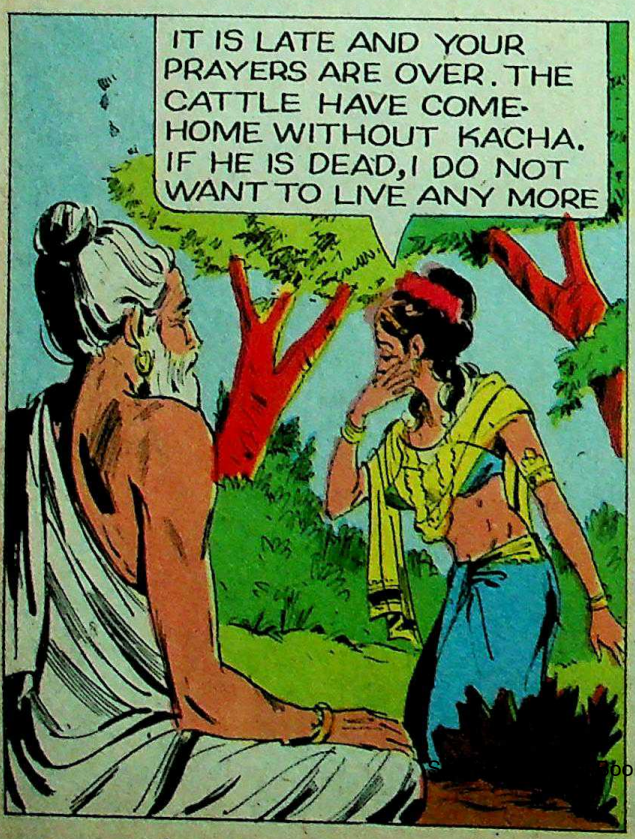

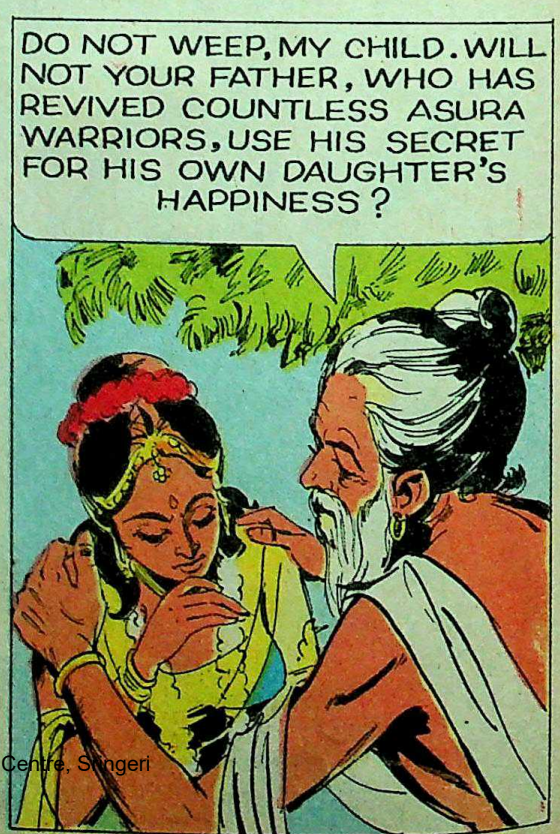

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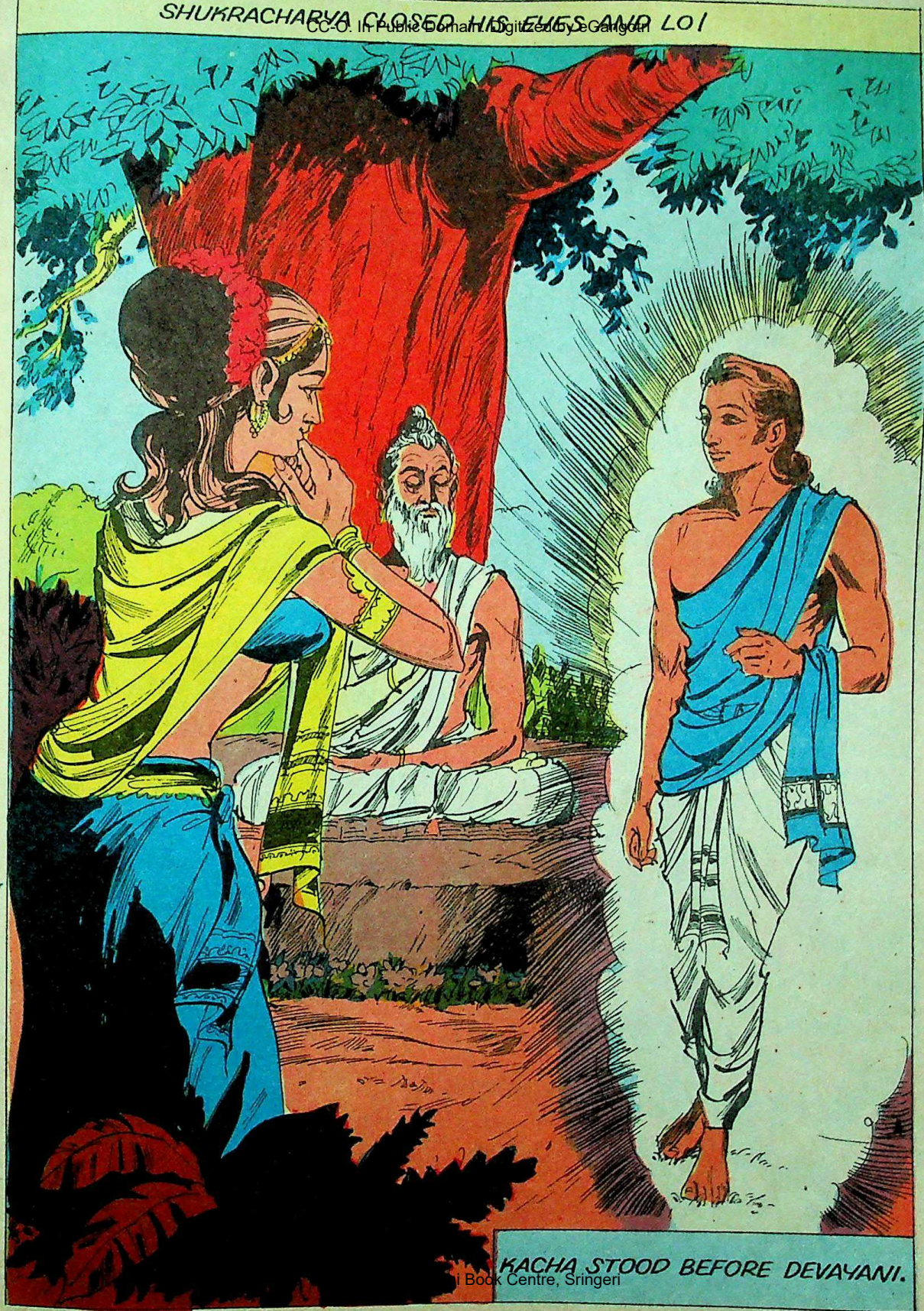

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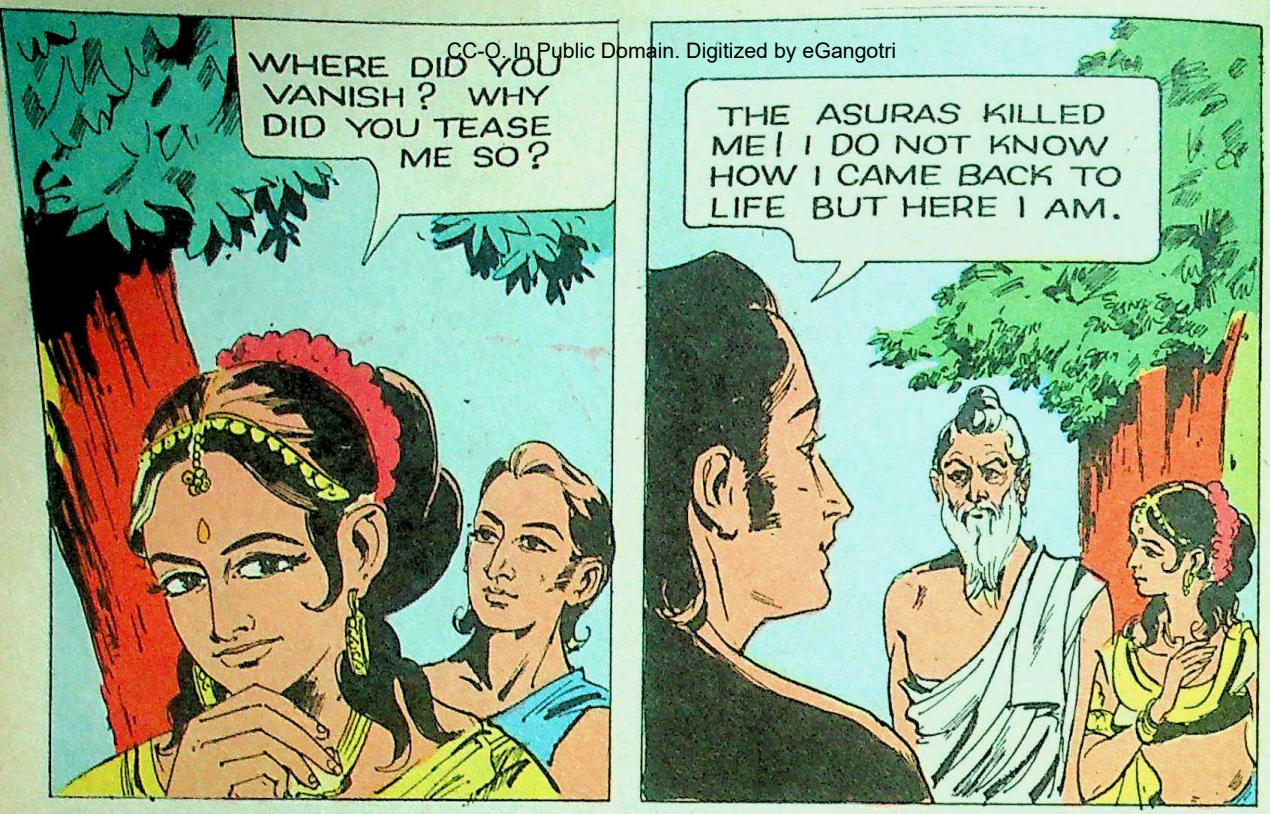
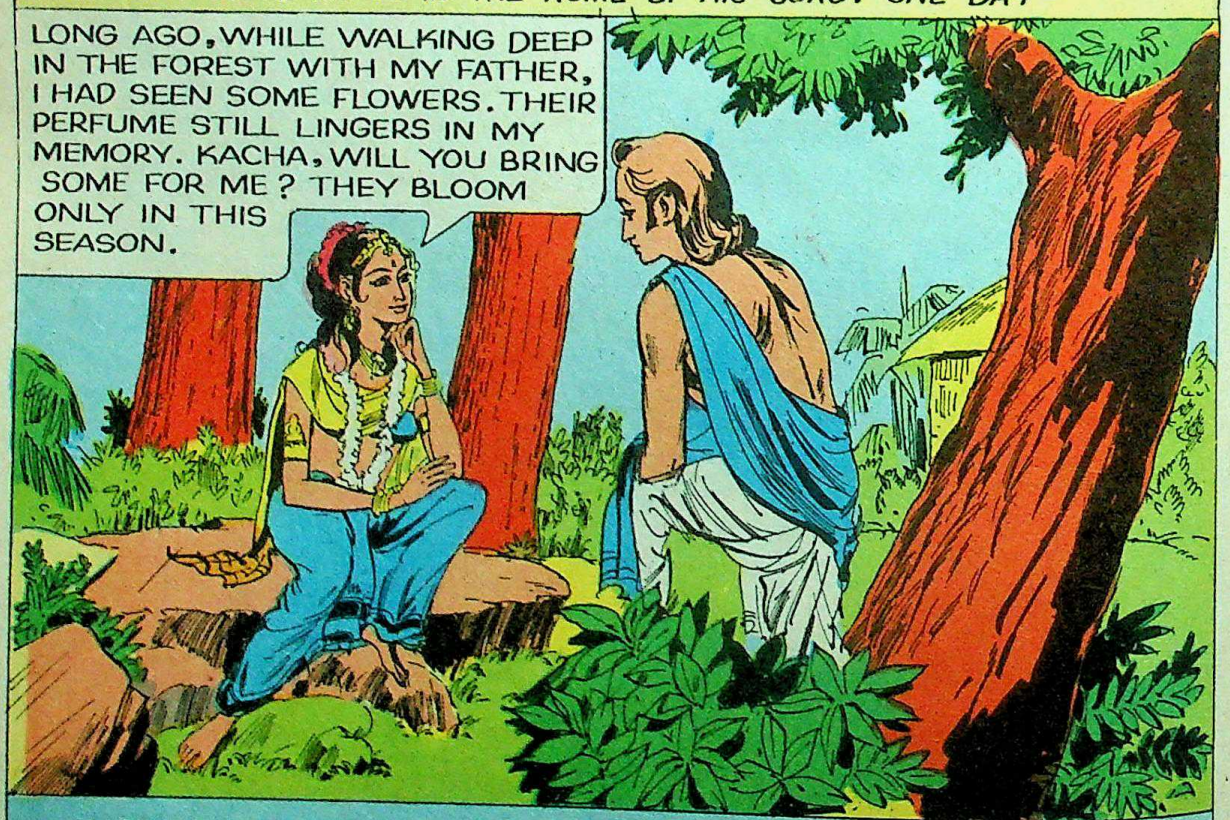


KACHA CONTINUED LIVING IN THE HOME OF HIS GURU. ONE DAY –



KACHA COULD HARDLY REFUSE THE ENCHANTING DEVAYANI SUCH A REQUEST.

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SO HE WANDERED DEEP INTO THE FOREST IN SEARCH OF THE FLOWERS. THE ASURAS WERE WAITING FOR JUST SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY.

THEY WAYLAID HIM AND SLEW HIM.

THIS TIME THEY CARRIED HIS BODY TO A LONELY SPOT. THERE –

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HOURS LATER AT SHUKRACHARYA'S HOME

KACHA IS AWAY LONG ENOUGH TO COLLECT FLOWERS FOR TEN MAIDENS. I WONDER WHAT KEEPS HIM?

WHY SHOULD I WORRY? I HAVE ONLY TO TELL FATHER AND KACHA WITH MY FLOWERS WILL STAND BEFORE ME.

MEANWHILE-

I WONDER WHAT KEEPS KACHA. IT IS TIME FOR HIS STUDIES. AND HE IS PROMPT. FOR SOME REASON THE ASURAS WISH TO KILL MY DISCIPLE. I FEAR HE IS IN THEIR CLUTCHES ONCE AGAIN.

DEVAYANI APPROACHED SHUKRACHARYA AND HIS SUSPICIONS WERE CONFIRMED.

FATHER !

DO NOT BE UPSET, MY CHILD.

ONCE AGAIN HE USED HIS SECRET KNOWLEDGE TO RECALL KACHA.

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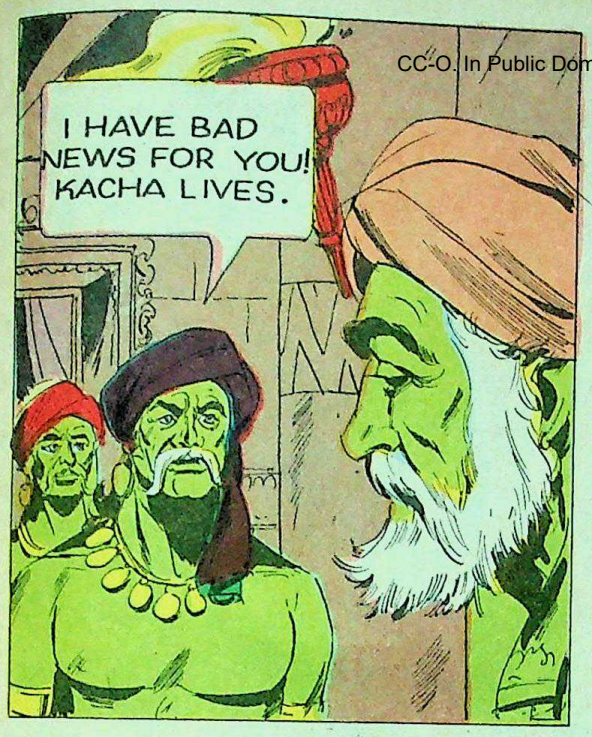

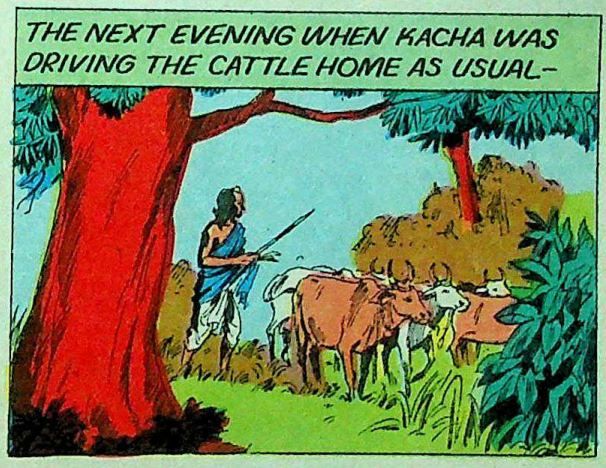

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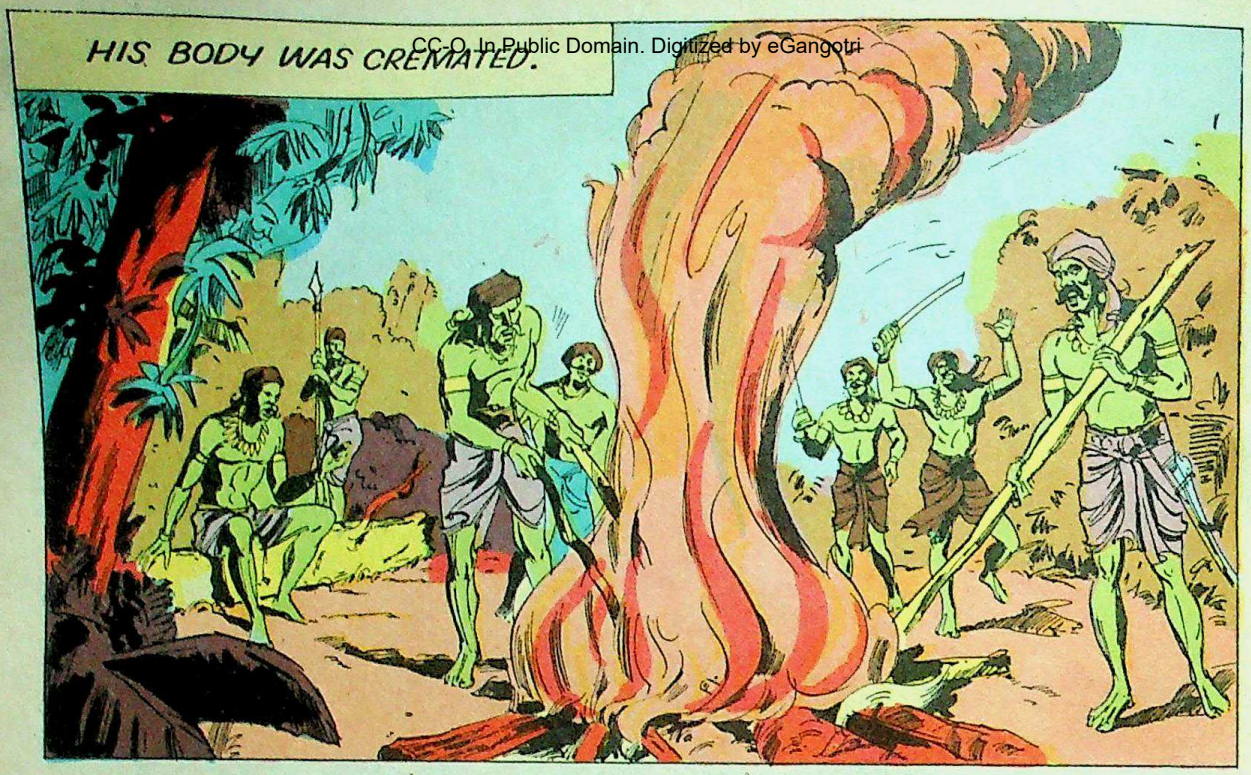

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THE GREYING ASURA THEN POURS THE GOBLET OF WINE TO SHUKRACHARYA.

O WISE ONE! WE BRING YOU THIS HUMBLE GIFT IN GRATITUDE FOR KEEPING OUR NUMBERS CONSTANT.

IF SHUKRACHARYA HAD A WEAKNESS IT WAS FOR WINE. HE EMPTIED THE CONTENTS OF THE GOBLET IN ONE GULP.

LONG LIVE THE ASURAS!

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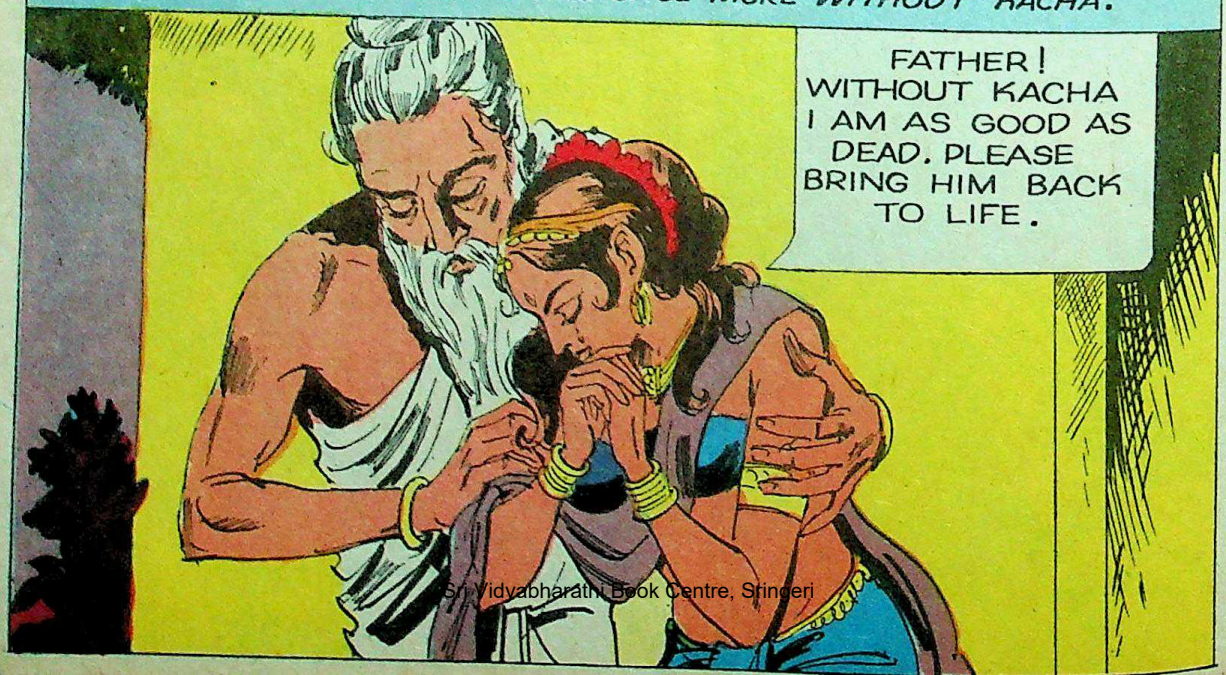
DEVAYANI WAITED IN VAIN FOR KACHA.

THE CATTLE RETURNED HOME ONCE MORE WITHOUT KACHA.



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SHUKRACHARYA KNEW THE FUTILITY OF RECALLING KACHA FROM THE DEAD.

WHAT GOOD WILL IT SERVE, IF I BRING HIM BACK TO LIFE ONCE MORE? THE ASURAS ARE BENT UPON KILLING HIM. A WISE SOUL LIKE YOU SHOULD NOT GRIEVE AT A LOVED ONE'S DEATH. YOU ARE YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL AND YOU HAVE YOUR LIFE TO LIVE.

BUT DEVAYANI'S LOVE FOR KACHA KNEW NO REASONING.

KACHA WAS A GOOD PUPIL AND LOYAL TO US. I LOVED HIM DEARLY AND NOW THAT HE IS DEAD, I DO NOT WISH TO LIVE.

PLEASE, FATHER, I DON'T WANT TO EAT ANYTHING.

I CAN'T BEAR YOUR SORROW.

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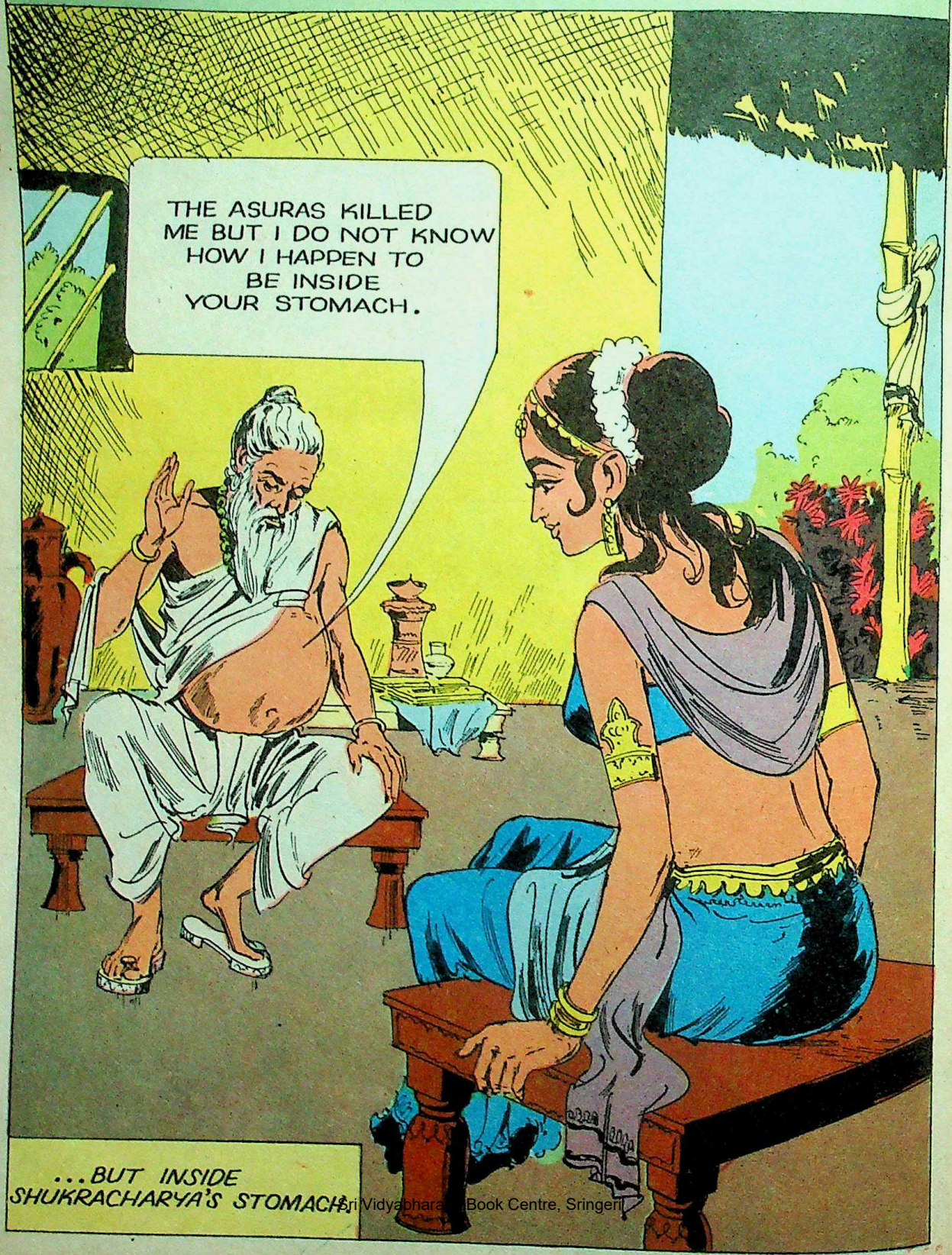
YET AGAIN SHUKRACHARYA USED HIS SECRET KNOWLEDGE AND CALLED UPON KACHA TO COME BACK TO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING. KACHA CAME BACK TO LIFE ...



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SHUKRACHARYA CURSED HIMSELE FOR DRINKING WINE.

HENCEFORTH WINE SHALL BE FORBIDDEN FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM.

SHUKRACHARYA, THE WISE ONE WAS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A DILEMMA.

KACHA CAN COME OUT ONLY BY KILLING ME.

BUT FATHER, I WILL NOT LIVE IF EITHER OF YOU DIES.

AS SHUKRACHARYA THOUGHT OF A WAY OUT, THE REAL PURPOSE OF KACHA'S VISIT DAWNED UPON HIM.

I NOW SEE WHY YOU CAME AND TRULY YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED. THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY BY WHICH BOTH OF US CAN SURVIVE TO ENSURE DEVAYANI'S HAPPINESS. I WILL HAVE TO TEACH YOU THE CRAFT OF SANJIVANI.

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AND SO KACHA LEARNED THE CRAFT FOR WHICH HE HAD COME TO THE HOUSE OF SHUKRACHARYA IN THE CITY OF THE ASURAS AND EMERGED FROM SHUKRACHARYA'S MANGLED BODY.

HE IMMEDIATELY BROUGHT HIS GURU BACK TO LIFE.

SHUKRACHARYA COULD NOT HELP BEING PLEASED WITH HIS PUPIL'S WISDOM.

SHUKRACHARYA THEN WENT TO SEE THE ASURAS.

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BUT KACHA WAS ONLY WAITING FOR THE FORMAL PERIOD OF HIS STUDIES TO COME TO AN END.

HOW WILL I BREAK THE NEWS TO DEVAYANI? SHE WILL BE HEART-BROKEN. BUT I MUST FULFIL MY DUTIES.

AT LAST THE DAY ARRIVED WHEN KACHA COULD LEAVE.

MY DAYS OF LIVING WITH MY GURU ARE OVER. I HAVE TO RETURN TO MY PEOPLE. MAY I TAKE MY LEAVE WITH YOUR BLESSING?

DOES DEVAYANI KNOW OF HIS DECISION? I WONDER!

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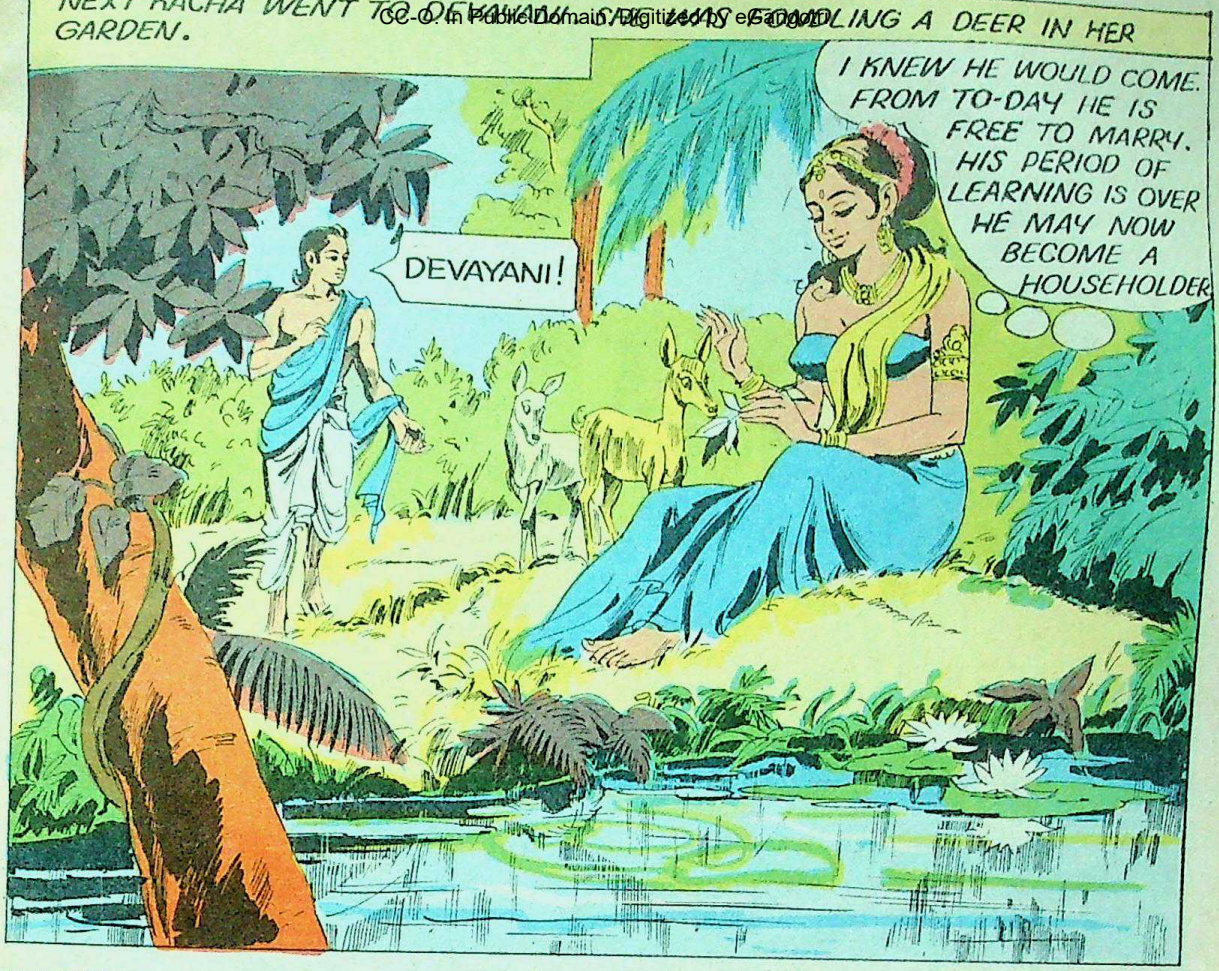

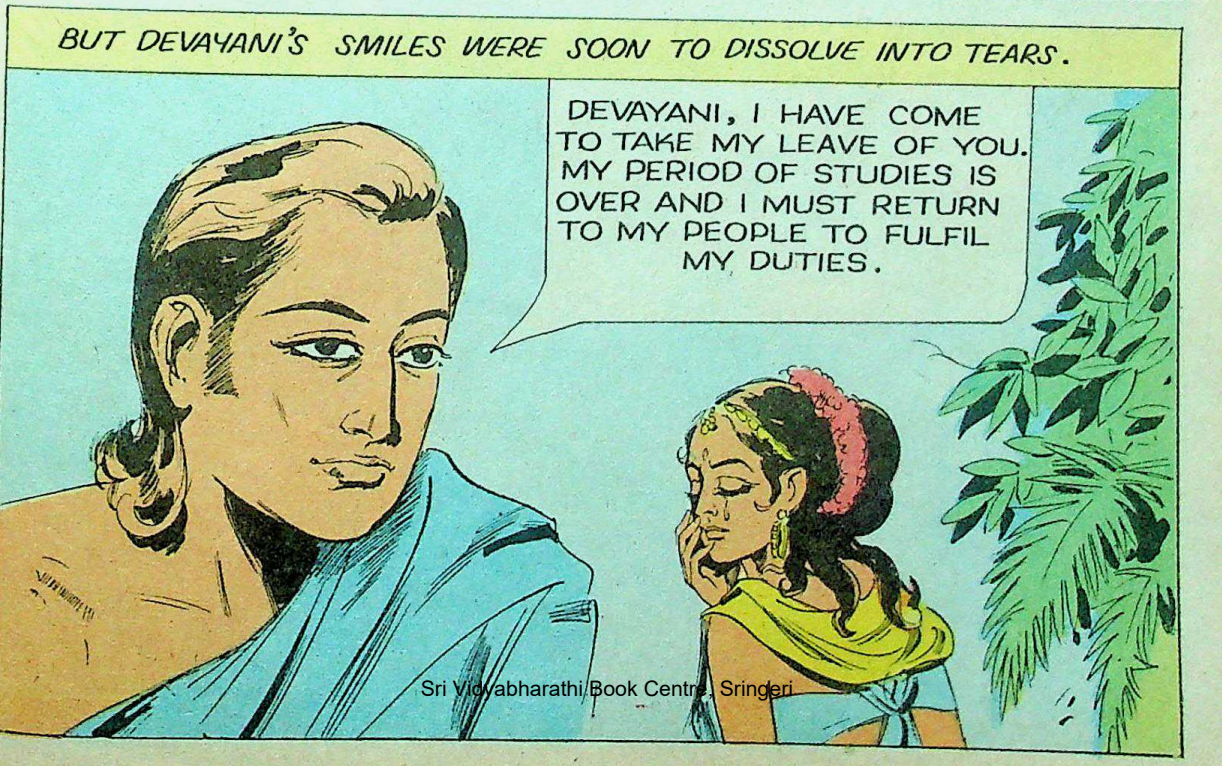

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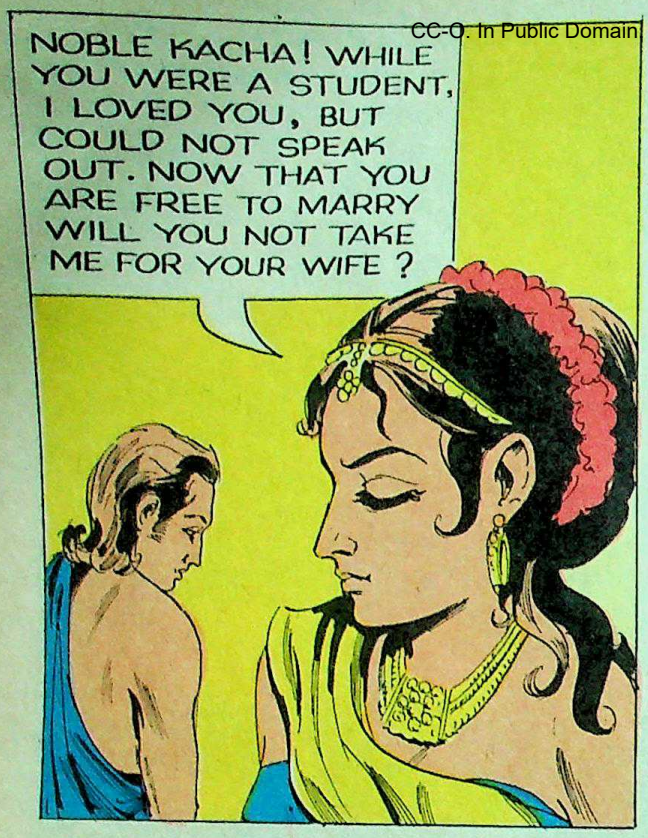
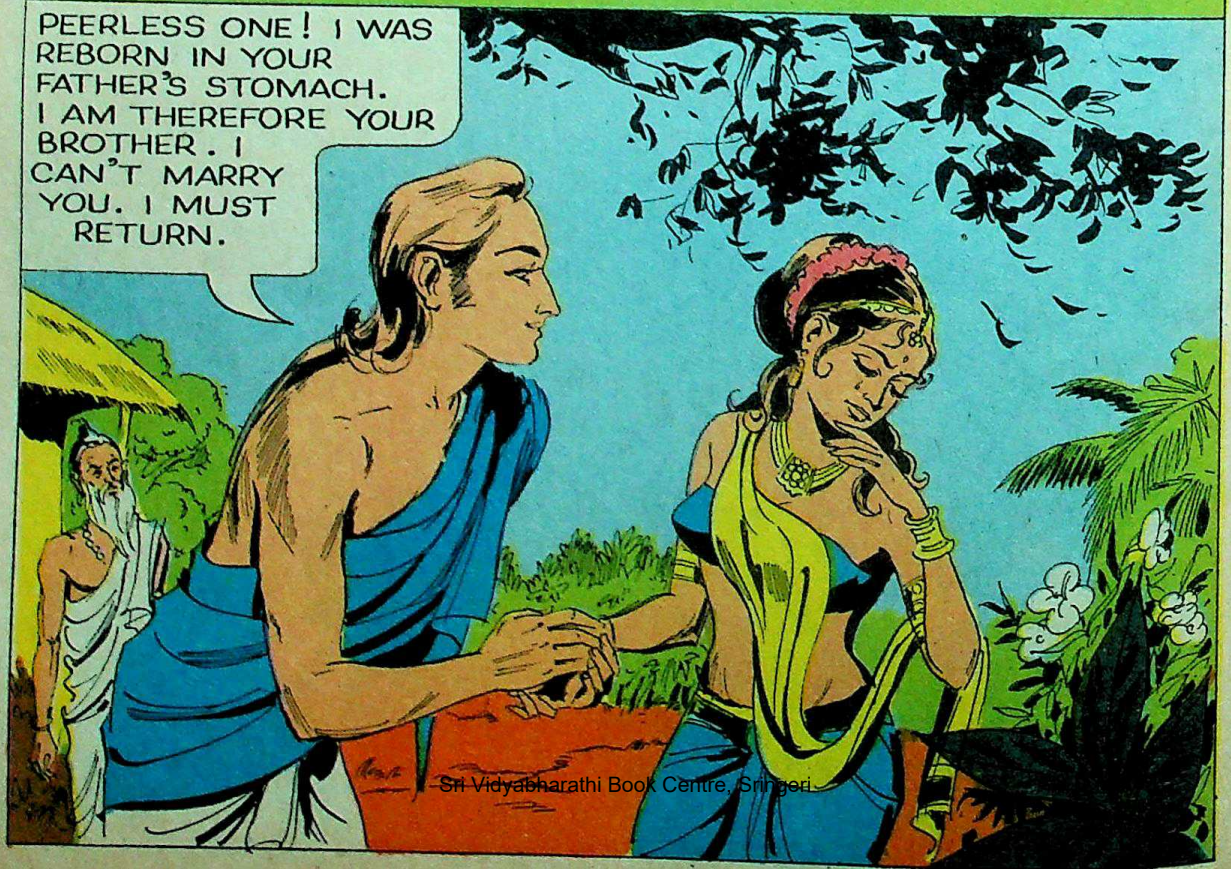


KACHA HELD DEVAYANI'S HAND TENDERLY.



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THE BROKEN-HEARTED DEVAYANI CRIED OUT IN HER GRIEF.

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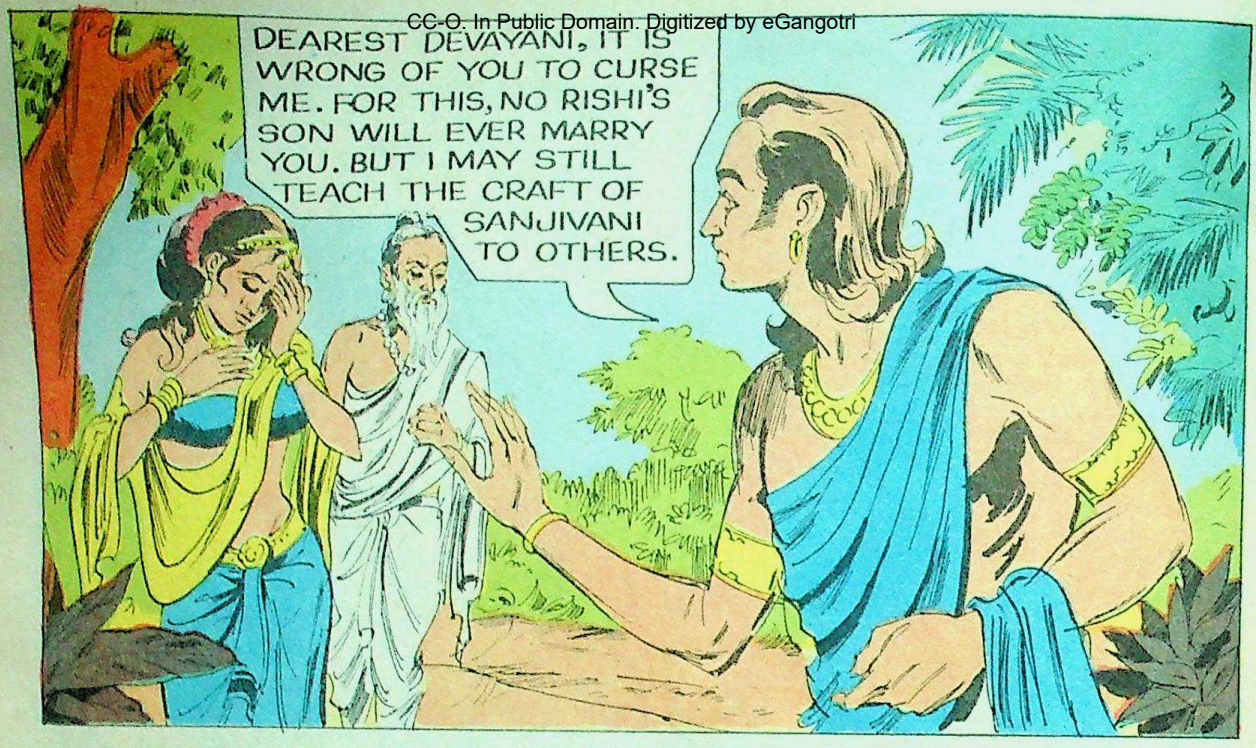

THEN KACHA DEPARTED FOR THE ABODE OF INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS.

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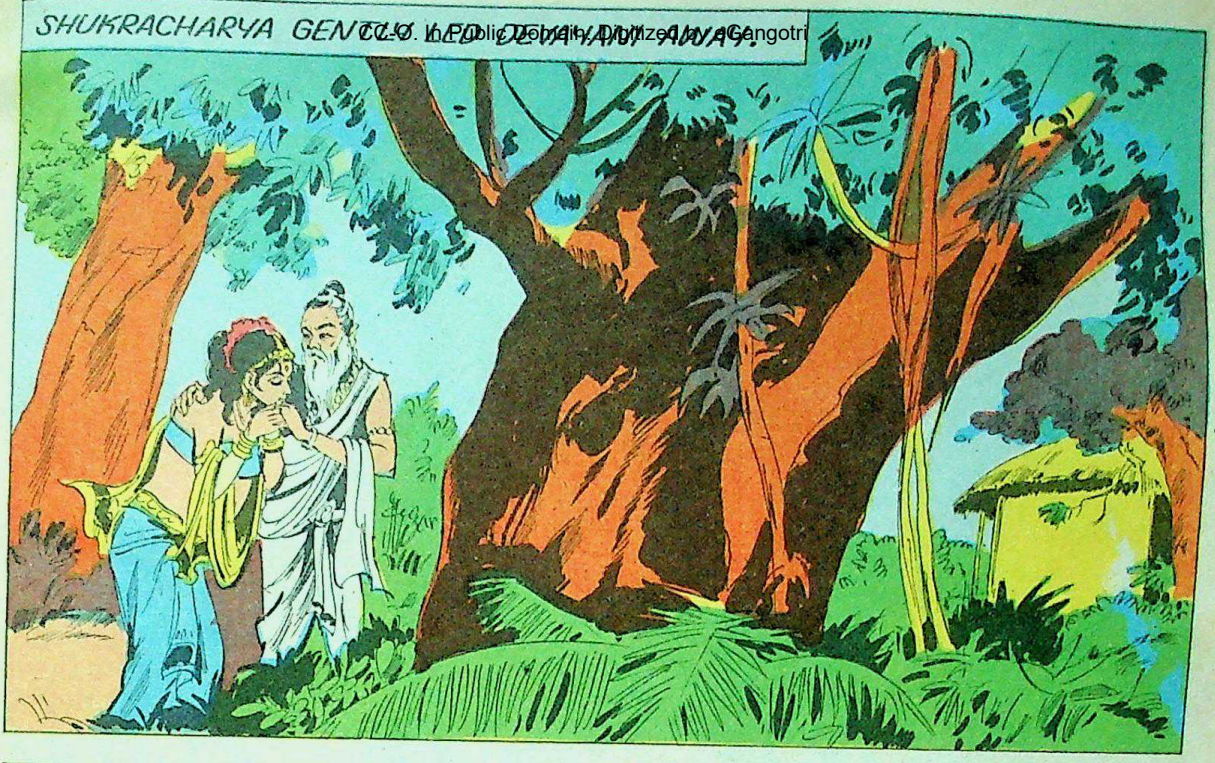
SHUKRACHARYA GENTLY LED DEVAYANI AWAY.



WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME, DEVAYANI COMPLETELY FORGOT ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF KACHA.

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AND SHE LIVED HAPPILY WITH HER FATHER AND HER PLAYMATES IN THE CITY OF VRISHAPARVA, KING OF THE ASURAS.

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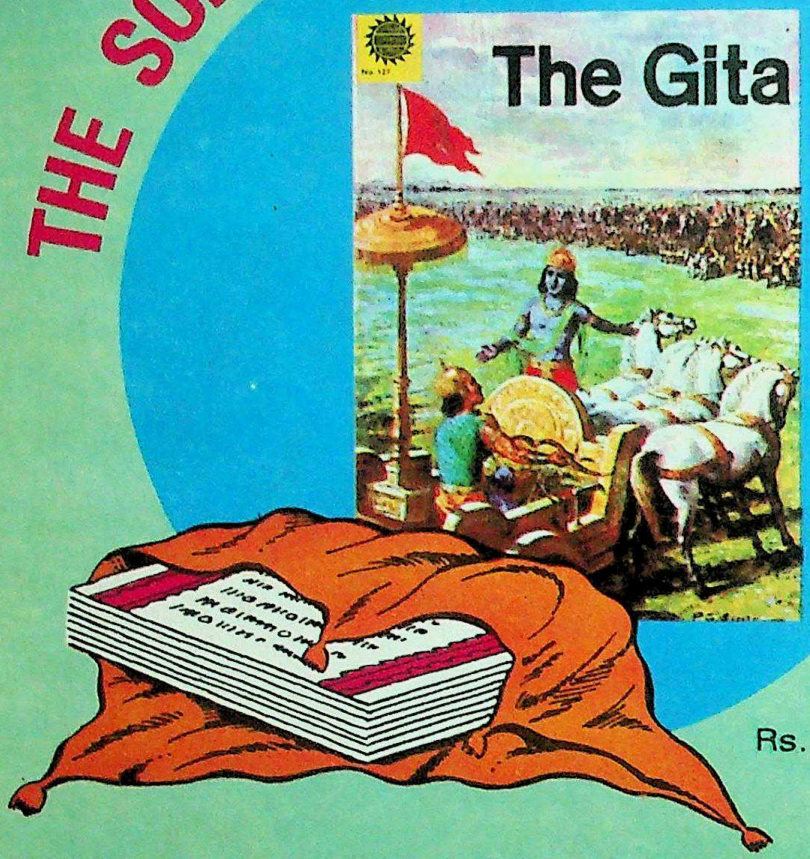

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